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Dear Neighbor:

I am the president of the Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee (NP&LC). Last November, the organization's trustees voted to support the Save Riverbank Park (SPARK) effort. (The 10.7-acre park is located in the Ironbound.) Since that time, much has happened. This includes just one public hearing, followed the very next day by votes of both the Newark City Council and the Essex County Freeholders to destroy the historic park and use \$22 million in taxpayer money to finance the construction of a "minor league" (but unaffiliated with any major league team) baseball stadium and a soccer stadium in its place.

Although dismayed by the actions of the city council and the board of freeholders, the SPARK Committee was successful in gathering signatures of registered Newark voters in sufficient numbers to force a city referendum on the subject. The referendum will be held on Tuesday, March 11. I urge you to vote, to encourage your friends and neighbors to vote and that you all vote "NO". The referendum is confusingly worded and very lengthy. I do not want to take the space here to restate it or try to interpret it. There are many issues related to this referendum question, but historic preservation in Newark -- and we all live in an historic district that is on both the state and national historic registers -- can be supported only by a "NO" vote.

Riverbank Park is part of the Essex County Park system, the oldest county park system in the United States. Like Central Park, Branch Brook Park and scores of others providing welcome green spaces in densely-populated urban areas throughout the U.S., Riverbank Park was designed by the firm of Frederick Law Olmsted. In the past month, it was nominated to the City of Newark Historic list by the city commission on landmarks and historic preservation.

On the back of this letter is an article from the February 24 issue of NEWSWEEK which speaks to the importance, the contribution to the quality of life, of Olmsted's parks. Although Riverbank Park is not mentioned, the words of the article apply just as well to its value and significance.

I urge you to vote in the Newark referendum on March 11 and to vote "NO" to show that the people of Newark care about the cause of historic preservation. Thank you.

Sincerely,

